

All of us pray in different ways at different stages in our lives. Sometimes our way of praying changes as we grow in our relationship with God.

We live in a multi-sensory world, where our senses are often overstimulated – even exploited and polluted. In a world where it is ok to ‘feel’ but where ‘touch’ has become a dangerous word. We can taste and savour all of the world’s foods, and are constantly invited to indulge and pamper our bodies with sensuous luxuries. But our senses can also help us to experience God. We were created to see as God sees, to hear as God hears, to touch as God touches, to taste as God tastes: we can reach out to God using our senses. We are invited, like the Psalmist, to “taste and see that God is good.. . to look towards God and be radiant.” (Psalm 33)

Some Biblical texts that can be used for practicing this way of praying:
2 Cor. 5:15; Ecclesiasticus 16 and 17; Acts 16.

Book suggestions

Booram, B. and Brent, B. (2012) *Awaken your senses – Exercises for Exploring the Wonder of God*, IVP Books.

Bristow, Stella (2006) *Sensing God - Ideas and resources for Creative worship*, Inspire.

Ferlo, Roger (2001) *Sensing God – Reading Scripture with all Our Senses*, Cowley Publications.

Norris, Gunilla (2011) *Simple Ways – Towards the Sacred*, BlueBridge.

Richards, Anne (2007) *Sense making Faith – Body, Spirit, Journey*, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

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Praying with the five senses



**God in everything we see,
hear, touch, taste and smell**

We can find God in everything we see, hear, feel, smell and even taste. Using our senses can help us realise our Lord's presence in everyday life.

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Praying with the sense of taste

The sense of taste goes beyond the experience of eating and drinking. The taste of wine can speak to us of joy. The taste of a meal cooked for you can speak of love and friendship. St Ignatius stresses the importance of 'tasting interiorly'.

What have you tasted today?

Speak with God for a few moments about these taste experiences.

When you have come to the end of your prayer, gently bring yourself back to the room and give thanks, or use words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.

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Praying with the sense of touch

Touching provokes a feeling: a cold stone will make you shiver involuntarily; caressing a flower will give you a sense of its sweetness, its freshness.

But our sense of touch also stimulates our emotions, and can literally touch our heart.

When you touch another person, you create a relationship with them.

Take the time to **think about what has been given to you through the sense of touch**. What have I reconnected with through touching someone or something?

Speak with God for a few moments about these things

When you have come to the end of your prayer, gently bring yourself back to the room and give thanks, or use words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.

Praying with the sense of sight

Everything we see and look at can be an expression of God. The beauty of creation speaks to us of the Creator. The visible reveals to us the invisible.

Think about what you have received through your eyes in the last few days. What image has stayed with you? What is your outlook on the world and on other people? What have you seen that you have marvelled at and can give thanks for?

To what or whom have you closed your eyes?

Take a few moments to talk about these things with God.

When you have come to the end of your prayer, gently bring yourself back to the room and give thanks, or use words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.



Praying with the sense of hearing

The world is full of sounds. We hear so much more than just words: voices, creaking, banging, scratching, birdsong, music, and even silence. When we are listening attentively, engaging our whole body, we let God's voice permeate our body and soul.

How have you listened recently? What have you heard? What word or sound has stayed in your memory?

For what do you want to give thanks?

To what or whom have you closed your ears?

Speak with God for a few moments about these things.

When you have come to the end of your prayer, gently bring yourself back to the room and give thanks, or use words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.

Praying with the sense of smell

A scent or taste can often awaken deep and powerful emotions. Smells often relate also to transformation, such as wood burning or food being cooked.

Allow yourself to **revisit one of these smells**; reconnect with this event in your life.

Talk to God about your experiences.

When you have come to the end of your prayer, gently bring yourself back to the room and give thanks, or use words that are familiar, such as the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) – whichever feels right and comfortable.

